
EXECUTIVE ADDRESS
AND
REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION.

BY THE PRESIDENT, RUDOLPH MATAS, M. D.,
NEW ORLEANS, LA.

[Extract from Proceedings Louisiana State Medical Society, Session 1895.]

EXECUTIVE ADDRESS

AND

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION.

BY THE PRESIDENT, RUDOLPH MATAS, M. D.
NEW ORLEANS.

Gentlemen—In compliance with the duties of my office as your chief executive, as specifically provided in Art. III, Sec. 1 and Art. IV, Sec. 3, of our Constitution and By-laws, I must now submit to you my report as chairman of the Committee on Organization.

Before proceeding with the text of my report proper I deem it necessary to take a cursory glance at the stirring events that immediately followed our last annual meeting, in May, 1894, and which so happily culminated in the final passage through the Legislature, on June 29th, of Senate Bill No. 90, entitled: "An Act to Regulate the Practice of Medicine and to create a State Board of Medical Examiners in Louisiana." I shall also direct your attention to the fact that all the efforts of the executive were concentrated in assuring the success of this all-important measure, and, subsequently, in the realization of the preliminary steps, such as the election and organization of the Board of Examiners, as provided by the new law. To cover these essential preliminary and official conditions we were compelled to call a special meeting of the society, which was held July 31st, with the happy results which are now permanently recorded in Appendix C of the 15th Volume of Transactions.

It was not until the business connected with that meeting was concluded that we were able to direct our attention to the important subject of organization.

MEDICAL DIRECTORY.

We were confronted at the very outset by a serious difficulty which has been realized, I am sure, by all those who, like myself, have been officially called upon to devise or suggest measures for the systematic organization of the medical profession in this State. This obstacle consisted in the lack of a complete and reliable directory to the medical profession in our State. Many partial lists of the physicians of Louisiana have been published at various times, some better than others, but none that were even approximately complete; none which could be depended upon to give a numerical estimate of the forces available for medical organization in this State. As I have stated in the introduction to Appendix G of the 15th Volume of Transactions, "it was thought at one time that the law of 1882, which made the registration of all practitioners in the office of the State Board of Health a compulsory requirement, would have eventually furnished the necessary data for a reliable directory; but, unfortunately, for reasons which need not be specified, the law was purposely evaded or involuntarily disregarded, so that only a very incomplete compilation was obtained. Nevertheless, the annual publication of the official register, though incomplete, was a valuable document, and was much appreciated as a help by the officers of this society. It was, therefore, with great regret that the profession received the announcement of the suspension of this valuable publication in 1893, which had been previously published annually by the State since 1883. The cessation of this publication has been most keenly felt at this moment, when the creation of two Boards of State Medical Examiners, one regular and one homœopathic, have made it evident that a comprehensive directory of the medical profession in Louisiana was an essential requisite to the proper notification of the profession with a view to the enforcement of the new medical law of 1894. It should be remembered that the present law, which is intended to regulate the practice of medicine by creating a Board of Medical Examiners, is the outcome solely of the persistent efforts of this society; and this body is, therefore, deeply concerned and practically responsible for the success of the Board of Examiners because the appointees are selected by the Governor exclusively from its membership. With this understanding of the situation, and in view also of the great value of a more perfect registry of Louis-

iana practitioners to the officers of this society, I decided, with the approval and aid of the Vice Presidents and other officers, to undertake the compilation of a directory that would be of service to both the Board of Medical Examiners and to the members of this society. With this object in view, printed slips containing the official registry of the physicians in each parish, according to the list published by the State Board of Health in 1893, were sent, with an appropriate blank, to each one of the Vice Presidents, who were requested to make additions or corrections to the list, according to the most reliable information obtainable, through correspondents in each one of the parishes in their respective Congressional Districts. The Vice Presidents all diligently seconded the efforts of the chairman in securing reliable returns; but, notwithstanding their efforts, it is to be regretted that they were not uniformly successful. The First, Second and Fourth Congressional Districts were comparatively complete and satisfactory, certainly as complete as it was possible to make them by a vigorous and conscientious inquiry in each one of the parishes in the districts. Returns from the other district were not obtained to the satisfaction of the Vice Presidents, but, nevertheless, the directories for these districts are more complete than any hitherto published. To the lists furnished by the Vice Presidents have been added all names registered in the Board of Health from 1893 to December, 1894. And many names were added to the list from the records of the regular Board of Examiners by its efficient Secretary, Dr. Cocram.

Notwithstanding the pains taken to secure accurate reports from the parishes, the directory, for some of these is, to say the least, still very unsatisfactory, and should be considered only as a provisional guide with the hope that it will serve as a basis for a more complete registry in the future, should the society decide to continue its publication.

MEDICAL FORCES IN LOUISIANA THAT ARE AVAILABLE FOR ORGANIZATION.

An analysis of this compilation reveals that at the time of the publication of this directory, February 12, 1895, the practitioners of medicine in Louisiana could be classified as follows :

Graduates of all classes.....	1,315
Licensed without diplomas.....	212

Total practitioners.....	1,527
Licentiates of the Board of Examiners since the publication of the directory, and up to April 25, 1895.....	71

Total to April 25.....	1,598
------------------------	-------

If we now examine this list from the standpoint of organization we will be compelled to deduct the following from the above, in order to make an approximate estimate of the available number that would be qualified for membership in our society :

Deduct licensed without diplomas.....	212
Deduct doubtful graduates.....	89
Deduct homœopaths, eclectics and other sectarians, about..	50

Total non-available	351
Therefore.....	1,598
Less.....	351

Approximate available graduates.....	1,247
--------------------------------------	-------

NUMERICAL STRENGTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY'S MEMBERSHIP.

Now, coming back to our society, we find that our list of permanent members at our last meeting embraces 379 names ; it will be safe to state that since the last meeting the new accessions will swell the list to at least 400 active permanent members.

The rate of progress in the growth of the society's membership is difficult to estimate because the complete membership roll has not been recorded until the last four years. We know, however, that in 1878 there were 79 members at the meeting of organization.

In 1879, 31 were added to the list.....	or 110
In 1880, 18 more were added.....	or 128
In 1881, 7 more were added.....	or 135
In 1882, there was no meeting.	
In 1883, 5 new names were added	or 140
In 1884, 22.....	or 162
In 1885, 18.....	or 178

In 1886, 12.....	or 188
In 1887, 17.....	or 195
In 1888, 19	or 204
In 1889, 17.....	or 221
In 1890, there was no meeting.	
In 1891, 14 new names were added.....	or 235
In 1892, 63 new names were added.....	or 298
In 1893, total.....	280
In 1894, 109.....	or 379

If we estimate the number of practitioners of medicine with a diploma who are eligible to membership in round numbers at 1,200, we will see that our society represents on the basis of a membership of 400, about $33\frac{1}{3}$ of our available medical population.

Our total permanent membership at the close of the session of 1894 amounted to 379 names. Of these 120 were contributed by the city, so that nearly 32 per cent. of the society's membership (or nearly one-third) was contributed by the city physicians. If we admit that the membership of the society will be increased to 400 at the close of the present session we will probably see the same proportion maintained.

In his annual address, in 1892, President Elliott estimated the number of practitioners who were available for membership at 1,100, and of these 300 were residents of the city. The total membership of the society then amounted to 198, of whom 53 were residents of this city, and 153 belonged to the State at large, showing that 18 per cent. of the profession of the State are members, while in the city and country, respectively, the profession is, for the city, a fraction below, and for the country, a proportion above 18 per cent. of the practitioners.

It is, of course, impossible to estimate at this moment the net gain in members that we will be able to record at the end of the present session, but it is exceedingly gratifying to note that since April, 1893, to May, 1894, the society's membership was nearly double, so that instead of 18 per cent. we are able to register $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of the total available medical population in our membership. It is to be fervently hoped that the splendid record of last year's session, under the pre-eminently successful administration of my lamented predecessor, will be again repeated, or even approximated.

PARISHES IN WHICH THE STATE SOCIETY IS NOT REPRESENTED.

Turning, now, to another phase of our representative functions, we notice that out of the 59 parishes in the State 47 are represented in our membership, or over 70 per cent. of the whole parish constituency.

The profession, however, in 12 parishes still remains without representatives in our society; these are:

Caldwell, 8 graduates.

Cameron, 5 graduates.

Catahoula, 10 graduates.

Concordia, 6 graduates.

Franklin, 11 graduates.

Sabine, 13 graduates.

St. Bernard, 3 graduates.

St. Martin, 9 graduates.

Tensas, 13 graduates.

Union, 33 graduates.

West Baton Rouge, 5 graduates.

West Carroll, 6 graduates.

A total of 82 physicians in 13 parishes who have failed, up to the opening of this session, to seek representation in our society.

This is a decided improvement, however, over the records of 1893, when, according to President Elliott's careful estimate, out of 59 parishes 20, instead of the present 12, were not represented in our society. In 1893, 10 parishes were only represented by a single member each. At the close of the session of 1894, the number of parishes represented by one member had been reduced to 5, so that there is marked improvement in this respect.

Nevertheless, when we consider that a territory embraced by seventeen parishes is only represented by five members, and that the total representation of the medical profession of the State amounts to 33½ per cent. of the whole, instead of the 66 per cent. that should be obtained to constitute a numerically representative organization, we must recognize that our labors in this field are not ended, and that much remains to be done before we can claim that our ideal has been realized.

THE FAILURE OF SYSTEMATIC MEDICAL ORGANIZATION IN
THE PARISHES.

In marked contrast with the notable increase in permanent membership and with the corresponding evidence of greater material prosperity and intellectual vigor which has been displayed by our society in the last four years, we must painfully recognize the confirmed, if not increasing decadence of local medical organization in the country parishes.

Our constitution distinctly states that it shall be the duty of the Committee on Organization "to use all practical means to organize the medical profession in local societies throughout the State," etc.

This has been the aim of all my predecessors, until 1893, when, after an experience of fifteen years, during which the efforts of our executive has been constantly directed towards the realization of this end, it was clearly recognized that this plan of organization had proved a failure in our State. In his second annual address, in 1893, President Elliott, while commenting upon the indifference of the parishes to systematic organization, was forced to the conviction that our present system was faulty and needed revision.

"The feeble interest taken in our central body by these affiliated societies makes me still believe," he said, "that a strong central State organization is more potent for good than a weak central body with many remote and feeble branches. A visible embodiment of power has upon each one of us and upon the public a far more stimulating and impressive effect than can the assembling of a few representatives from our parish societies. Fifteen years of experience has taught us that the latter plan has not proved successful. Broad and wide in its conception it nevertheless makes the success of the society dependent upon too many possible sources of failure, while here and there, where population is concentrated, parish societies have shown great force and vigor; the great majority of these societies are feeble, and themselves need some source from which they can draw life and inspiration."

This opinion was again emphatically confirmed by my immediate predecessor, President Miles, who after noting the increas-

ing languor in parish organization, also believe that the efforts of the administration should be directed chiefly to building a powerful and self-sustaining central body.

The experience gained during my administration discouragingly but conclusively confirms the conviction of my eminent predecessors. The reports of our Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary plainly tell the whole story and prove conclusively that our society would have long ago ceased to exist had it derived its support solely from the contributions of the affiliated societies. The Treasurer's report for 1893 tells us that out of thirteen societies that were then in affiliation only two had paid their dues in full for 1893, and these were the Avoyelles and the Orleans Parish Medical Societies. We are fortunate this year in being able to present a more creditable showing, for, in addition to these societies, other societies, viz: those of Morehouse, Ouachita and Plaquemines, have complied with the obligations of affiliation.

Our list of effective or *bona fide* affiliated societies is therefore limited to five.

Grateful as we must feel for the staunch loyalty of these societies, we cannot fail to recognize that this is not a brilliant result after seventeen years of almost consecutive prayer and preaching on the subject of parish organization.

This condition of affairs is one that demands the serious attention of this body because it affects the very foundation—the guiding principle of the framers of our constitution. When our society was reorganized in 1878 it was stated by the committee (of which Prof. Richardson was chairman) appointed to solicit the co-operation of the profession in organizing the present State Society, that among other advantages “it was only through the formation and maintenance of numerous parish societies that the State Society may be made successful,” and that “it is only by the formation of such parish societies which shall act in concert with the State Society that the profession can hope ever to accomplish any thing whatever in the inauguration and promotion of the State medicine,” etc.

These suggestions were evidently taken as the basis of our organization, and our present constitution, which was first published in 1879, reflects the same spirit and in every article indicates that

this is the great aim and purpose of our society, *i. e.*, to become ultimately an assembly of representatives or delegates from a completely organized parish constituency.

OUR CONDITIONS APPARENTLY NOT YET FAVORABLE TO SYSTEMATIC PARISH ORGANIZATION.

But time and experience have proven that our conditions—whatever these may be—are not favorable for the development, growth and maintenance of the splendid structure that our elders had fondly hoped to build in our unpropitious soil. On the contrary, notwithstanding the devoted and unceasing appeals of our executive officers, the society languished and would have crumbled into dust by this time had it not been rescued by the saving clause, which permits this society to encourage individual or so-called “permanent membership” apart from associate membership, by affiliation. The growth and prosperity of the society during the last three years, especially by the comparatively rapid additions of individual members, has proven that great results can be obtained in the most difficult field of organized medical effort—State medicine—by a body of individual representatives from the parishes annually assembled from all portions of the State to voice the needs of the people and of the profession.

While this is certainly not the ideal system of securing the most effective professional organization, we must accept our present system as the best adapted to our peculiar local conditions, and we must be thankful that, defective as it is in principle, it has already done so much in the furtherance of our beneficent purpose.

THE SOCIETY'S PLAN OF ORGANIZATION HAS CHANGED AND THE CONDITIONS OF AFFILIATION ALTERED.

As our system of organization, if I may so term it, has gradually drifted away from the plan so plainly laid down in our constitution, it is obvious that the time has come when we must consider a revision of our organic laws in order that they may be adapted to our altered conditions. The necessity for an early revision becomes an imperative duty, if we are to do justice to the few faithful societies that have so loyally maintained their allegiance in the midst of so many discouraging circumstances. As well stated by President Miles, “our regulations provide for the assessment of all affiliated societies in proportion to the num-

ber of delegates to which they are entitled." If these rules were enforced under the conditions at present existing the burden of maintenance would fall heavily on a minority of the members. Art. VII, Sec. 1, of the Constitution, relating to this matter cannot at this time, in equity, be enforced. Our society has gradually resolved itself into an organization of permanent members, and delegates of affiliated societies are virtually without recognition. Thus it seems unfair that a few affiliated societies existing should be taxed for the maintenance of the State Society.

Therefore, the question that now awaits solution may be stated as follows:

Shall we, in view of the unsatisfactory results thus far obtained, dispense entirely with the plan of systematic parish organization into affiliated societies, and eliminate, *in toto*, from our constitution all the clauses referring to affiliated societies and associated membership? Or, shall we still vigorously continue to encourage the systematic organization of the parish societies, but simplify the conditions of affiliation or allegiance until such time shall come when the organization of a sufficient number will permit of a return to the original delegate system?

I am decidedly in favor of the last proposition. It will be a material loss to diminish the yearly contribution from our main pillar—the Orleans Parish Society—but the dignity of a State Society and an ordinary sense of justice demand that we should cease to impose a heavy tribute upon one society, especially when we consider that it is composed, in the large majority, of our permanent members, in addition to the generous and expensive hospitality which it has for years voluntarily imposed upon itself for our entertainment.

. A REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION RECOMMENDED.

To make my position clear in this matter, I would repeat that we must revise our constitution in order to simplify the conditions of affiliation so they may be made as little burdensome as possible upon our organized constituency. I would also recommend that in this revision we provide for a system of official representation in all the parishes in which this society has resident members. The germ of this suggestion was first presented in the address of President Newton, in 1889, when he recommended that an auxiliary committee of one member for each parish in this

State, acting under the auspices of their respective Vice Presidents, should be provided for by constitutional amendment, making it the special duty of these to urge upon physicians in their respective parishes the importance and advantages to be obtained from the formation of medical societies in their midst.

President Elliott, in his admirable address of 1892, independently reached the same conclusion. He, very convincingly, states: "Experience has taught me that very small results can be expected from printed letters, circulars, postal cards, and such efforts through the mails. The universal use of the mails for advertising purposes makes each one of us immediately discount the importance of communications received in this way. Our daily mail brings us numbers of circulars of this nature which are speedily cast aside and forgotten, simply because they are general circulars. We have grown into the idea that nothing treated in this general way can be of much importance, or that which is intended for a thousand others cannot suffer much through my individual neglect."

The personal method seems to be the only successful one, and some efforts made by members of our body in the past prove its utility and suggest a feasible plan.

This plan is:

That this society shall appoint in each parish one of its members as a Committee on New Members, and that it shall be the duty of this committeeman to present personally the claims of this society to each regular and reputable physician in his parish, and to report the work accomplished to the Vice President for his Congressional District by March 1st of each year.

He adds: "If the selection of the right man in each parish can be accomplished I feel convinced that our membership can be increased rapidly."

I have referred to this recommendation at some length because, notwithstanding the emphatic stress laid upon it by Presidents Newton and Elliott, and the recommendations for its adoption given by the committees appointed to consider the suggestions of the President, it has really never been given an official and satisfactory trial. After seriously considering the various plans that have been suggested by all our Presidents with the view of increasing our membership, none have appeared to me more practical and likely to accomplish good results than this.

THE APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE TO REPRESENT THE SOCIETY
IN EACH PARISH RECOMMENDED.

I would, therefore, again repeat the recommendation urging that the President elect, officially appoint a committeeman or representative of the society in each parish and in each ward of the city of New Orleans, whose duty it shall be—

(1) To solicit the co-operation of every reputable physician in his parish in the effort to increase our membership.

(2) To prepare a correct list of all practitioners of medicine in his parish; their ethical status from the standpoint of their qualifications for membership in this society, where graduated, and the date of graduation.

(The object of this list is that we may annually correct our directory of physicians in order that a complete and reliable registry of the medical profession in this State may be obtained and its annual revision facilitated.)

(3) He shall prepare a brief report on the medical topography, prevailing diseases, climatology and other local conditions that may be peculiar or of interest from the medical standpoint in his parish.

(4) He shall report the result of his labors before March 1st of each year to the Vice President of his Congressional District.

I would furthermore suggest that the names of these appointees be published conspicuously in the annual volume of transactions as an Auxiliary Committee on Organization.

MEANS ADOPTED DURING THE PAST YEAR TO INCREASE
MEMBERSHIP.

In order to carry out this idea, I have corresponded with all the Vice Presidents, asking them to secure applications of good men from the parishes in which our representation is defective, and especially in the twelve parishes, previously mentioned, in which we are not at all represented. In addition to a large personal correspondence, I have sent out by mail, with the invaluable assistance of our faithful and efficient Corresponding Secretary, a number of documents to all the reputable members of the profession whose names and addresses we could secure.

These documents consisted in a circular letter showing the

splendid results obtained by our efforts in the Legislature in securing the passage of the medical bill during the year 1894; extracts from the constitution, showing the objects of the society; extracts from the by-laws, explaining the requisites for membership; application blanks; index of contents of our last volume of transactions. This was sent out during the early part of last summer, shortly before the present meeting. The same documents were again recently sent out, with the additions of a preliminary programme of the present meeting, hoping that by these repeated reminders of our active existence and the evidence of the unquestionable progress that we have accomplished, we could probably induce some of the physicians of the State, who are still undecided, to join our ranks. Thus far eighteen applications for membership have been sent in, but it is hoped that before the expiration of this session we shall be able to record a far greater number of accessions to our ranks

EVERY MEMBER URGED TO ACT AS SPECIAL COMMITTEEMAN
ON ORGANIZATION.

Finally, to conclude with my report on the subject of organization, I shall again repeat, with President Elliott, that "while laying before you the suggestion of a definite method for the working up of our membership, let me urge upon your individual zeal which will make each one of you, without appointment, act as a special committeeman upon membership. Those who have the interest of the society at heart sufficiently to bring them here will need, I trust, no word of mine to quicken them in this all important matter."

THE STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND ITS RELATIONS
TO THE STATE SOCIETY.

Intimately connected with the subject of organization and with the success of our society is that of our relations with the State Board of Medical Examiners, which is constituted by appointees selected from our membership. The address delivered on the occasion of our called meeting in July dealt almost exclusively with this subject, and the recommendations made on that occasion are so fully recorded in Appendix C of our fifteenth volume of transactions that they need not be repeated to-day.

Immediately after the names of the appointees of Governor Foster were officially announced, August 20, 1894, the members of the board organized, and the law at once went into active operation. The board has held three meetings since its organization, during which it has passed on the merits of 133 applicants for the license to practice in this State.

It is not within my province to detail the results obtained by the board, but in the short time (seven months) since it came into existence it has already given evidence of its efficiency, activity and ability to cope with the numerous difficulties that must necessarily beset the execution of any untried and repressive legislation.

In our message to this society at the special meeting of 1894 we said: "It is for the members of the future board to study carefully and critically the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the present law, and to test in every practical manner the merits and defects of its executive provisions. It is admitted by all that there are objectionable features in this act, but it is only by experience in its active operations and in the study of its results that we will be able to determine the modifications and additions that it will be most desirable to secure by future legislation."

Agreeably to this suggestion, the President of the board, Dr. Kennedy, has kindly prepared a detailed report for the present meeting, which will fully explain its organization; its operations, the results thus far obtained; the defects and imperfections that have been revealed by the practical applications of the law, and the remedies that experience has suggested are required to make it effective in its application.

At the same called meeting in July, we also directed attention to the necessity of adding a new article in our constitution which would permanently define and establish the official relations of the future Board of Examiners to this society, which could not have been anticipated by the original framers of our constitution. To meet the new conditions, we appointed a committee of three, consisting of Dr. C. Chassaignac, acting chairman of the Judiciary Committee; Dr. I. J. Newton, Jr., chairman of the Committee on State Medicine, and Dr. T. S. Kennedy, President of the Board of Examiners, to present a report, which is to be submitted at this meeting, and which I recommend to your attentive consideration.

I cannot dismiss this subject without referring with special thankfulness to the successful inauguration of this most important measure during the term of our administration. The claims of the Louisiana State Medical Society for recognition in the historic annals of this State could rest alone on the accomplishment of this crowning result of fifteen years of steady and laborious effort. By the provisions of the act the Louisiana State Medical Society becomes the active agent or the instrument of the law, and thus obtains a permanent organic status which must conduce to its stability as an organized body.

Of the many important and useful legislative enactments that have come into existence through the instrumentality of this society, none can compare with this act in its far-reaching power for good in elevating our professional standard, in promoting the public welfare, and in assuring the permanent success of the organization that gave it birth.

THE ANNUAL VOLUME OF TRANSACTIONS.

Never in the history of this society has a volume of transactions been issued which reflected so much credit upon its members than the handsome and well nourished tome which records the proceedings of the fifteenth annual session and of the memorable special meeting of July 31, 1894.

My late predecessor expressed the desire that the volume should be "to every member the most valuable work added to his library during the year." Had he lived to see the fifteenth volume of transactions, we are confident that he would have agreed that his wishes had met with an enthusiastic response from the present administration.

Not only has the Publishing Committee fully carried out all the suggestions that were contained in the President's address, but, at my solicitation, has added much other matter that will tend to make the volume indispensable as a work of reference to the medical practitioners in the State of Louisiana. The publication of this octave volume of 537 pages, together with other extraordinary expenses, that were specially necessitated by the passage of our medical bill, have told heavily upon our finances. But, if we remember that the volume of transactions is the best

index to our intellectual, professional and material progress, you will admit that it is the best investment that can be made of the funds of the society.

When we consider that many of our members are compelled to remain at their homes and thus miss the direct opportunity for professional improvement and entertainment that is afforded by their meetings, we must be prepared to give them a *quid pro quo* for their dues in the shape of a really useful volume, rich in matters of local professional interest and information.

It is in the nature of the average human being to soon tire of purely abstract theoretical claims upon his sense of duty. Even superior men become unreliable if their faithfulness to principle is not materially or practically rewarded. So it is with our professional brothers, we must arouse their sense of obligation to their profession; and, after this, encourage them to maintain their loyalty by actual, palpable rewards for their devotion to the common cause. The work of this society in the field of legislation has begun to yield its fruit, but the more tangible reward and inducement to increased effort that we can offer our members is in the annual presentation of a volume which shall be the repository or medical treasure-house of the physician in Louisiana.

THE MEDICAL DIRECTORY.

In pursuance of this idea and with the view of facilitating the labors of the executive staff, as well as for the benefit of the society, I would urge that the medical directory, introduced in the fifteenth volume of proceedings, be continued, and that the work of annual revision be based upon the reports of the Vice Presidents, who are to draw from the official representatives of the society in each parish for the information by the plan previously recommended. The duty of perfecting this directory should devolve on the Secretary of the State Board of Medical Examiners, who being officially interested in the completeness and accuracy of the directory should be willing, without other inducement, to assume the responsibility of the annual revision.

I would also recommend that the historical record, which has been added to the present volume by our Secretary, be continued, with the additional statement of the total membership at each session, from the date of the first meeting. This will be a valuable help for the ready estimation of our comparative progress.

THE CONTINUED FEVERS COMMITTEE.

The study of our continued fevers has been placed in charge of a general chairman, supported by several committees, who are to co-operate in furnishing all the available data that could be procured in our public charities, private hospitals and rural districts. The auxiliary committees that were appointed were numerous in members, with the hope that a general interest would be taken in a work which, by common consent, is the most deserving of attention.

COMPARATIVE RACIAL PATHOLOGY IN LOUISIANA.

It will be noticed that our program also announces the title of several papers which deal with the racial peculiarities of the negro from the standpoint of various specialities. This should form the basis of a collective study of the pathology of the negro, which could be continued in future with the reasonable hope that we would soon enlighten the profession with conclusive evidence on the controverted subjects that are involved in it.

Surely, if there is any field in which we can expect to throw some original light, it is in the field of racial pathology. Our forefathers labored long, earnestly and successfully in these fields, and the renown of the medical profession of Louisiana, in the *ante-bellum* period, was largely based upon their researches in the pyretology and comparative pathology afforded by the peculiarly composite population of this State.

Researches on these subjects, which touch us so closely, should find a prominent place in our transactions.

THE LATE PRESIDENT, DR. A. B. MILES.

The brilliancy of the legislative triumph that has been scored by this society, in 1894, and which has made this year memorable in its annals, has been darkly clouded by the irreparable loss that the society has sustained in the death of its late President, Dr. A. B. Miles. The successful launching of our medical board, has only made us feel more keenly the incalculable affliction that has deprived it of its most powerful advocate and our profession one of its ablest and most beloved leaders.

Six days before his untimely end, which no one then seriously apprehended, we met in this hall to take the first steps

that were to make the golden dream of this society a positive reality. We all, then, deplored his absence, for it was largely due to his individual efforts, his prestige and influence, that the act creating our present Board of Examiners was passed in its present form by the General Assembly. I can only repeat after his death the public acknowledgment made during his life on the occasion of our electoral meeting, when I publicly expressed my great indebtedness to him for his loyal support, generous counsel and powerful influence in overcoming the final difficulties that beset the passage of our bill and threatened to destroy it in the lower house.

It was during his administration that the society reached an unparalleled level of prosperity, as proven by the unprecedented increase in our membership. His ability, exquisite tact and judgment were never exhibited to greater advantage than while discharging the duties of the chair at our last annual meeting.

His presence added to the dignity of our society; his keen, well-balanced judgment gave weight to our discussions; his magnetic influence attracted many admirers who, following wherever he led, enriched the society by their contributions. It is meet, therefore, that we should commemorate his splendid record and arduous devotion to our interests by some worthy tribute to his memory; and, to this end, I would recommend that, in addition to the report of the chairman of the Committee on Necrology, which will embody an expressive and appreciative memorial, that a portrait of Dr. Miles be given a conspicuous place in our next volume of transactions.

THE LATE EX-PRESIDENT, DR. C. D. OWENS.

We had not yet recovered from the crushing blow that had deprived us of a noble leader when we were again stricken by the hand of death which robbed us of another Ex-President, in the person of Dr. C. D. Owens, who, on the 15th of September, died at the Hotel Dieu in consequence of peritonitis caused by acute appendicitis. I shall not encroach upon the functions of the Committee on Necrology further than to remind you that Dr. Owens served as the head of our administration during two years of 1889-90 and 1890-91, a period of great trial for this society, in consequence of the general depression caused by the overflow of the Mississippi river. His devotion to this society

is well displayed in his eloquent and polished address, delivered before us in May, 1891. It is a forcible plea for higher medical education and a higher standard of qualifications to practice medicine. He ably reflected the spirit that has animated all the Presidents of this society since its foundation, and the watch-words, "organization," "culture," "progress," which were so frequently on his lips made him worthy of remembrance as an able exponent of the best traditions of our society.

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

I desire to lay stress upon the advantages of a closer relationship with the American Medical Association than has been displayed by our society in the last few years. We should never lose sight of the intimacy of our union with the national organization which has served as our model and guide. Our constitution expressly states that one of the objects of the society is "to co-operate with the medical profession throughout the United States in sustaining the American Medical Association," etc.

There are numerous questions of great interest to us as an affiliated society which are annually discussed at the meetings of the American Medical Association, and reports of these discussions should be officially presented to us by our delegates. I believe that the present mode of appointing delegates is really a mere incumbrance and a useless performance. It is advisable in future to appoint in the list of delegates only those who really intend to be present at the meeting of the national association.

THE LIBRARY.

While little can be expected in the way of building an efficient and really valuable State medical library, it should be an easy matter to collect a complete set of the transactions of other societies that would be of value for reference. A library consisting of volumes of proceedings would prove positively useful to our officers in the comparative study of the problems that frequently arise in the administration of our affairs. I strongly urge that this matter be made the subject of a detailed report, annually, by the Librarian, who should furnish the Secretary a list of all the volumes required to complete imperfect sets in order that they may be procured by exchange or otherwise, if possible.

THE PLACE OF MEETING.

While, personally, as a matter of convenience, I would prefer to attend the meetings of the society in the city, I, nevertheless, as one of its members, do believe that we are not furthering the interests of this body by continually meeting in the city. Ours is a State society, and we must recruit our constituency from all sections of the State. I therefore concur entirely with President Miles on this subject, and believe if our society is to be a representative State society it must hold its annual meetings in different places throughout the State.

Finally, I must thank my associates and fellow-officers for their valuable co-operation during my administration. Without depreciating the valuable services rendered by all the Vice Presidents, I believe it is only just to distinguish Vice President W. K. Sutherlin, of Mansfield, Fourth Congressional District, with a special mention for the thoroughness and promptness with which he complied with his obligations and for the sacrifices in time, money and comfort that he made to secure complete registries of the physicians in congressional districts.

